

Charter School Enrollment

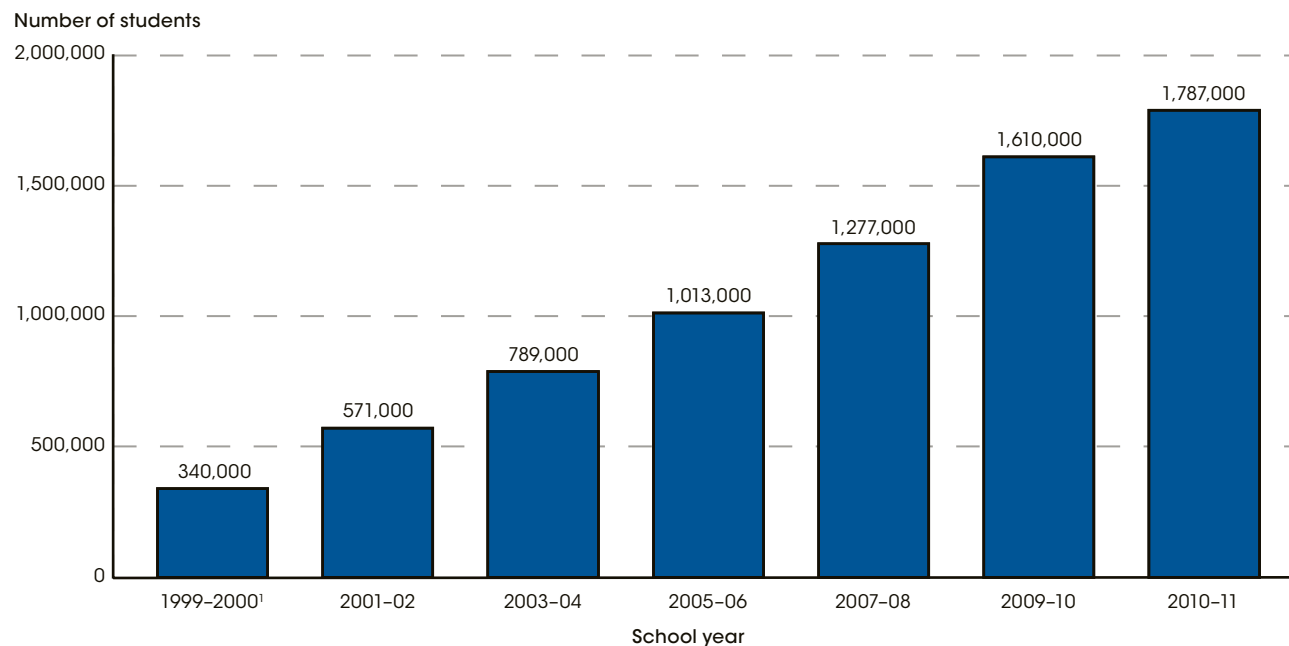
From school year 1999–2000 to 2010–11, the number of students enrolled in public charter schools increased from 0.3 million to 1.8 million students. During this period, the percentage of all public schools that were public charter schools increased from 2 to 5 percent, comprising 5,300 schools in 2010–11.

A *public charter school* is a publicly funded school that is typically governed by a group or organization under a legislative contract or charter with the state or jurisdiction. The charter exempts the school from selected state or local rules and regulations. In return for funding and autonomy, the charter school must meet the accountability standards articulated in its charter. A school's charter is reviewed periodically (typically every 3 to 5 years) by the group or jurisdiction that granted its charter and can be revoked if guidelines on curriculum and management are not followed or if the standards are not met. The first law allowing the establishment of charter schools was passed in Minnesota in 1991. In school year 2010–11, charter schools legislation had been passed in 41 states and the District of Columbia.

In Maine, no charter schools were operational in 2010–11, even though the establishment of them had been approved. In the following states, charter school legislation has not been passed: Alabama, Kentucky, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, and West Virginia.

From 1999–2000 to 2010–11, the number of students enrolled in public charter schools increased from 0.3 million to 1.8 million students. During this period, the percentage of all public schools that were public charter schools, based on schools that reported enrollment, increased from 2 to 5 percent, comprising 5,300 schools in 2010–11.

Figure 1. Number of students enrolled in public charter schools: Selected school years, 1999–2000 through 2010–11



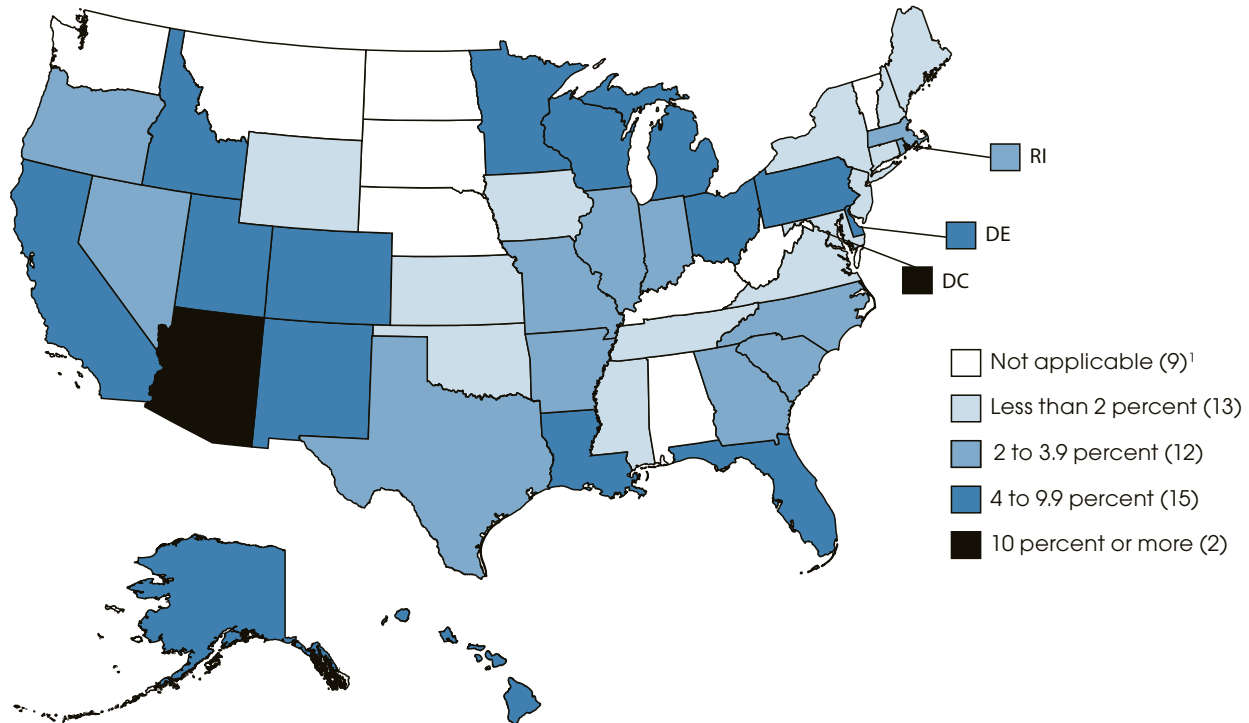
¹ Data for New Jersey were not available and therefore are not included in the estimates.

NOTE: Data are for schools reporting student membership. Student membership is defined as an annual headcount of students enrolled in school on October 1 or the school day closest to that date. The Common Core of Data (CCD) allows a student to be reported for only a single school or agency. For example, a virtual school (identified as a "shared time" school) may provide classes to students from other schools and report no membership of its own. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 1999–2000 through 2010–11. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 116.

In addition to the increase in the number of charter schools, the enrollment size of charter schools has grown over time. The percentage of charter schools with enrollments under 300 students decreased from 77 percent in 1999–2000 to 59 percent in 2010–11.

The percentage of charter schools with enrollments of 300–499 students increased from 12 to 22 percent during this period; the percentage with 500–999 students increased from 9 to 15 percent; and the percentage with 1,000 students or more increased from 2 to 4 percent.

Figure 2. Percentage of all public school students enrolled in charter schools, by state or jurisdiction: School year 2010–11



¹ Not applicable. State has not passed a charter school law.

NOTE: Data are for schools reporting student membership. Student membership is defined as an annual headcount of students enrolled in school on October 1 or the school day closest to that date. The Common Core of Data (CCD) allows a student to be reported for only a single school or agency. For example, a virtual school (identified as a "shared time" school) may provide classes to students from other schools and report no membership of its own. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2010–11 (version 1a). See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 117.

In 2010–11, California enrolled the most students in charter schools (364,000), and the District of Columbia enrolled the highest percentage of public school students in charter schools (38 percent), representing 27,000 students. In that same year, more than 10 percent of public school students in Arizona were enrolled in charter schools. In 15 additional states, between 4 and 9.9

percent of public school students were enrolled in charter schools. Of the states with 4 percent or more public school students enrolled in charter schools, eight were in the West; three, plus the District of Columbia, were in the South; four were in the Midwest; and one was in the Northeast.

Reference table: *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, tables 116, 117

Glossary: National School Lunch Program, Charter school, Student membership, Traditional public school, Free or reduced-price lunch, Elementary school, Secondary school, Combined school